

**Contact Deb:**

340 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
360-786-7976

**Local 17th District #:**

256-0689

**Toll-free hotline:**

1-800-562-6000

**Hearing-impaired hotline:**

1-800-635-9993

**Leadership and  
Committees:**

Assistant Majority Whip  
Member, Transportation  
Member, State Government  
Member, Technology, Tele-  
communications & Energy  
Member, Joint Legislative  
Audit and Review  
Member, Legislative Transpor-  
tation Committee, Aviation  
and Statewide Planning Sub-  
committees  
Alternate delegate, Pacific  
NorthWest Economic Region

## *Making a Difference in State Government*

### *Representative*

# **Deb Wallace**

**17th District**

November 2003

Dear 17th District Neighbor:

Results. Accountability. Bipartisanship. You should expect results and accountability from government and from me as your elected representative. We must work together to focus on making our great state an even better place to live.

During my first session in Olympia, I worked with members of both parties to tackle many difficult issues facing our state, including a \$2.7 billion deficit. I came to Olympia to serve because I think we need to challenge the way we make decisions, and get results. I am here to represent the issues that matter to our families in Southwest Washington — and to bring about positive change in state government.

It is also time to raise the bar. Although the Legislature earlier this year was charged with passing a two-year biennial budget, we didn't address the long-term financial health of our state. This is not a partisan issue — it's an issue of getting past the rhetoric and proactively addressing our long-term economic future.

Please inform yourself and weigh in on these important issues. I want you to know how much I appreciate your time and interest in the legislative process.

Your participation in government makes it work better for all citizens. Please don't hesitate to call, write, or e-mail whenever you want to tell me what you think about an issue, or if you have any questions. My Vancouver telephone number is: 256-0689. I hope you will also consider placing your name on my legislative e-mail update. To subscribe, please e-mail me at [wallace\\_de@leg.wa.gov](mailto:wallace_de@leg.wa.gov).

Again, thank you for the honor of serving you in the House of Representatives! I look forward to reading and hearing your thoughts on these and other issues.

Best wishes,

Deb Wallace  
State Representative  
17th Legislative District



## ■ Budget:

### **It's definitely not business as usual in Olympia**

Going in to the legislative session, I did not think we could address the budget with a business-as-usual attitude! This became even more apparent as I learned more about the \$2.7 billion budget deficit, the economic downturn, and the prospect of future budget shortfalls.

The budget was drafted by the governor, using a new and much-improved method to prioritize state services. In years past, the budget was developed by adding an inflation factor and simply adding money to the previous biennial budget. The governor's approach this time was a much more responsible way to decide what state services should continue. While it was not a perfect process, it was much better than before.

The unemployment rate in Clark County has lingered at nearly 10 percent. It's true that just as families must live within their budget, so should the state. However, it isn't always that simple.

In the last two years, the cost of health care has increased by 38 percent. Other costs are rising as well. In the last 10 years, budget-revenue resources have been reduced by \$1.6 billion through initiatives. Due to population growth and the rising cost of services such as health care, the state budget automatically grows without increasing services.

I am concerned about how decisions we make today will affect our future. I think we need to face our long-term budget issues. Let's talk about it. Taking on these tough issues is what you've elected me to do. And although it's not an easy route, I will do my best to address these issues head-on.

We as legislators and citizens must make informed choices. We must understand our tax system to ensure that it is based on equity, that it is sustainable, and that it enhances our state's economic climate and business competitiveness long-term.



## ■ Energy:

### **It's all about jobs**

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) must hold the line on its proposed rate hike.

You'll recall that the administration originally wanted to impose a 15-percent rate hike this fall. If this rate hike had been enforced, it would have effectively cut even deeper into the pockets of Washington families and businesses. Bonneville supplies half our energy in Clark County. Any rate hike would also come on the heels of the nearly 50-percent rate increase that has already been put in place the last couple years.

Drought conditions and low revenues led the federal agency to project a \$1.6 billion shortfall by 2006. However, Bonneville has the ability to manage its costs — and the administration can look at cost-cutting measures to address its budget needs.

During the 2003 session, I prime-sponsored a measure to rein in the BPA plans to raise our power bills. This legislation is absolutely critical to people across our state. In

our own Southwest Washington region, Clark Public Utilities saw an eight-percent wholesale-rate hike from Bonneville this spring.

The BPA has now lowered its estimated rate increase to two percent. However, our rates are still higher in the United States than in much of the world. I am continuing to research and address these and other issues that are so critical for our state.



### ■ **Challenges remain in health care, long-term care**

Home-care workers were granted a salary increase of 75 cents an hour by the Legislature this past session. As a result, the current salary for home-care workers is \$8.43 per hour.

These men and women take care of our state's most vulnerable citizens. Our ability to attract skilled, dedicated home-care workers is very difficult because of historically low wages. Many people currently need the help of these workers — or will need care in the future. To learn about the challenges we face in long-term care and to voice your opinion about future actions, please consider attending this upcoming forum:

**Date:** Monday, December 8  
**Time:** 12:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Luepke Senior Center  
1009 East McLoughlin Boulevard  
Vancouver

### ■ **Prescription drugs: Every citizen should have access to the right medicine**

I supported legislation this past session to help lower the high cost of prescription drugs.

I am happy to report this measure was successfully passed by the Legislature. To obtain information on how to lower your prescription-drug costs, please call my office at 256-0689.

### ■ **Jobs and economic vitality are the bottom line**

With a 9.9 percent unemployment rate in Clark County, we must focus on policies to put people back to work. Economic development is very high on my legislative agenda.

The Legislature passed critical tax programs to support the semi-conductor industry, which will significantly aid Clark County's economy. But we must do more. Research and development brings billions of dollars of investment and jobs to our state. I will work with other legislators to support the reauthorization of the research-and-development tax incentive.

### ■ **Education dollars are shrinking for our schools**

The actual revenue collected for education in the past decade has been reduced by \$535 per student per year, when inflation is considered. (The Rainier Institute Report, March 2003.)

Our schools are being asked to do more with fewer dollars. Unfunded federal mandates such as the "No Child Left Behind" policy, although they might be good in concept, have made it necessary to spread thin dollars even thinner. I encourage citizens to weigh-in regarding this important issue by contacting state and federal representatives.



## Speak your mind:

**Please attend a  
community meeting  
on December 10**

I'm looking forward to hearing what you and your neighbors have to say in a public forum on Wednesday, December 10, at the Cascade Park Community Library. The meeting will start at 6 p.m. at the library, which is located at 301 Southeast Hearthwood Boulevard in Vancouver.

Talking with one another and listening with one another is the surest way to make the kind of improvements we need to be making in our neighborhoods, in our communities, and in our state.



## ■ Thank you for your time today!

Please know that I appreciate your continuing interest in the state Legislature. I would like to welcome community groups to include me on your upcoming meeting agendas. I'd really like to talk with you about what's next in Olympia!

Take care,

Deb Wallace  
State Representative  
17th Legislative District

PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Washington State  
Department of Printing

***Making a Difference  
in State Government***

**Representative  
Deb Wallace**  
340 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600